

## **LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES AMONG FORM 4 MALE AND FEMALE ARTS STUDENTS IN TWO URBAN SCHOOLS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to identify the perceptual learning style preferences (PLSP) of Form 4 Arts male and female students in learning literature in English. It also attempted to investigate whether teachers were aware of, and subsequently varied their instructional strategies to cater to students' PLSP. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results revealed although both male and female students displayed similar PLSP patterns, female students showed greater preference for certain learning styles. The results also showed teachers' instructional strategies were seldom varied despite them being aware of their students' PLSP. Implications of the findings for practical applications of PLSP research in language classrooms are discussed.

### **Introduction**

In this modern day, a typical classroom situation is no longer restricted to the talk and chalk method. Diversity in teaching and learning styles is beginning to gain more attention as many studies have pointed out students learn better when instructional strategies match their preferred learning styles (Reid, 1987; Blackmore, 1996; Zhenhui, 2001; Kang, 1999). However, effective matching between instructional strategies and learning styles can only be achieved when teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capacities, potentials and learning style preferences (Zhenhui, 2001).

Learning styles can be categorised into three broad areas – cognitive, affective (personality) and perceptual (sensory) (James & Gardner, 1995, cited in Brown, 1998). The cognitive learning style is concerned with ways people think about and process information (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 159, cited in Brown, 1998). The affective learning style, however, is influenced by one's personality traits as it supports the belief that every individual has different personality traits (Swanson,